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### (54) **Welding method and apparatus using infrared radiation**

(57) A filter (28) for absorbing electromagnetic radiation which is used in heating a welding zone wherein a first part (24) is joined to a second part (26). The filter (28) includes a solid material (36,38) for absorbing undesired wavelengths of radiation from a heating source (20) before the radiation reaches the welding zone (27). The filter (28) also has a housing which contains a chamber (34) within which a fluid (42) is placed. The fluid (42) cools the solid material and also may absorb undesired wavelengths of radiation from the heating source (20) before the radiation reaches the welding zone (27). A heat exchanger (30) is connected to the filter (28) in order to cool the fluid (42) during the filtering process.

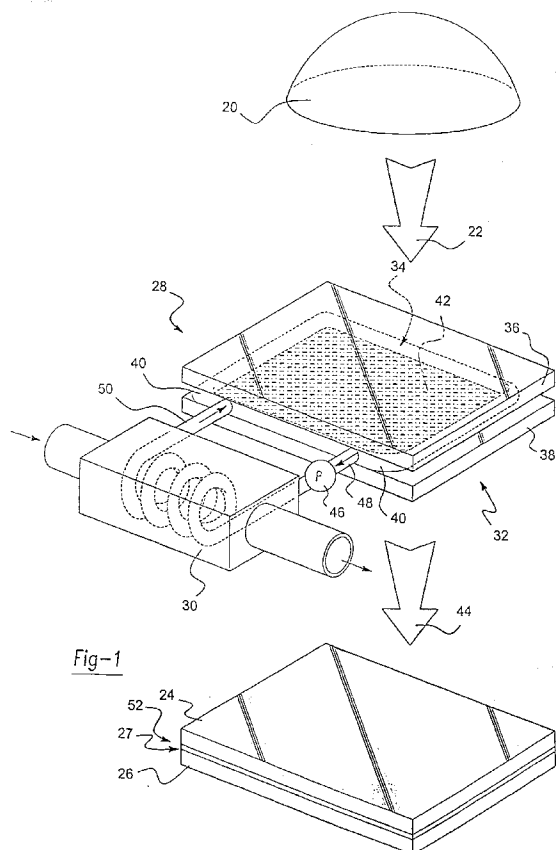


Fig-1

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## Description

### BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates generally to welding. It relates more particularly to an improved method and apparatus for welding plastics and like materials utilizing electromagnetic radiation.

Welding is commonly used to join plastic or resinous parts, such as automobile thermoplastic parts, at a welding zone. Lasers have been used to provide the heat necessary to perform the welding operation (for example, see United States Patent No. 4,636,609 which is expressly incorporated herein by reference). Lasers provide a focused beam of electromagnetic radiation at a specified frequency (i.e., coherent monochromatic radiation). However, lasers tend to be more expensive relative to other heating sources.

Less expensive heat producing sources, such as infrared heating lamps, are also used to provide infrared radiation for heating the welding zone. One such process is Through-Transmission Infrared Welding (TTIR). The TTIR technique utilizes infrared radiation which passes through at least one plastic part (sometimes called the "transmission piece") in order to heat the welding zone in at least one other piece and to provide sufficient heat to join at least two parts.

Infrared heating lamps emit noncoherent radiation which typically has a much broader frequency range (i.e., polychromatic) than laser sources. Some of the frequencies within that broader range produce undesirable results. These undesirable results include heating portions of the parts beyond the desired or targeted welding zone. This can result in turn in undesirable effects, including deformation and marking of the overall part.

Solid materials have been used to selectively filter or absorb these undesirable frequencies before the radiation reaches the target parts. However, solid filters suffer from several disadvantages, including uncontrolled build-up of heat, as well as having to be continually replaced due to the damage or degradation caused by the radiation or heat by-product. The degradation of the solid filter over a period of time inhibits the performance of the solid filter to absorb the undesirable wavelengths. It is also difficult to adequately cool solid filters in many applications with such present technology as blowing cool air upon the solid filters.

A primary object of the present invention includes providing an improved welding apparatus and method utilizing a filter or filter system of unique design which obviates the disadvantages of the aforementioned prior filters and is less costly. Several embodiments of the invention are disclosed.

Additional advantages and features of the present invention will become apparent to the skilled artisan from the subsequent description and the appended claims, taken in conjunction with the accompanying

drawings in which:

### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

- 5 Figure 1 is a diagrammatic perspective view depicting an apparatus employing the present invention; Figure 2a is a side view depicting an alternate embodiment of the present invention; and Figure 2b is a top view depicting an alternate embodiment of the present invention.

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

- 15 Referring to Figure 1, there is disclosed a welding apparatus comprising a radiant heating lamp **20** which emits noncoherent polychromatic electromagnetic radiation **22** in order to weld a first part **24** to a second part **26** at welding zone **27**. A uniquely designed filter **28** is disposed between the radiant heating lamp **20** and the first part **24** to absorb undesired wavelengths included in radiation **22**. A heat exchanger **30** is provided to maintain filter **28** within a desired temperature range while filter **28** is in use.

- 25 Filter **28** includes a housing **32** having a chamber **34** defined by a first plate **36** and a second plate **38**, the first and said second plates being generally parallel (if flat as shown), and a peripheral seal **40** disposed therebetween. First plate **36** and second plate **38** filter part of radiation **22** emanating from radiant heating lamp **20** by absorbing substantially all of the undesired wavelengths of radiation **22** before it can reach first part **24**. The filtering produces filtered radiation **44**. Optionally, a clamp (not shown) can be used to maintain the structural integrity of the housing **32** by clamping the first plate **36** to the second plate **38**.

- In accordance with the present invention, chamber **34** contains a cooling or cooling/filtering fluid **42** which cools first plate **36** and second plate **38**. However, in the preferred embodiment, fluid **42** also filters part of radiation **22** emanating from radiant heating lamp **20** to produce filtered radiation **44**.

- In a TTIR application, the first part **24** transmits the filtered radiation **44** to welding zone **27**. The filtered radiation **44** heats the welding zone **27** in order to weld first part **24** to second part **26**. Significantly, the absorption of the undesired wavelengths by filter **28** allows welding zone **27** to be adequately heated without the filtered radiation **44** causing overall damage to or undesired effects in first part **24** or second part **26**.

- The present invention includes at least one of the plates being used as a solid filter, providing some or all of the filtering function. For example, first plate **36** and second plate **38** may be of substantially the same material as first part **24** (or at least the plates should have substantially the same absorption profile as first part **24**). Accordingly, if first part **24** is a polycarbonate plastic part, then first plate **36** and second plate **38** are also

polycarbonate plastic parts. Moreover, fluid **42** may act as a cooling or heat transfer agent, or it may preferably act as both a partial filter and as a cooling or heat transfer agent. The following may be used in determining the thicknesses of the plates (**36** and **38**): the particular application; the intensity of the radiation **22** from the radiant heating lamp **20**; whether fluid **42** is acting as a filtering fluid; and whether both plates (**36** and **38**) are being used to filter.

It will be appreciated by the skilled artisan that the composition selection of the first plate **36** and second plate **38** and fluid **42** will generally be dependent upon several factors, most importantly its ability to absorb the undesired or harmful wavelengths of the radiation **22** employed in the particular application. For example, in at least one preferred embodiment, first plate **36** and second plate **38** and fluid **42** should absorb the wavelengths of radiation **22** in the range from about 1 micron to about 5 microns for welding conventional thermoplastic polymeric materials. More preferably, they should absorb the wavelengths of radiation **22** in the range from about 1.3 microns to about 4 microns for welding such polymeric materials.

Conventional polymeric materials which are particularly useful for welding by the practice of the present invention are preferably selected from the thermoplastic class of materials. These materials can be categorized in several ways. The preferred materials are generally classified as engineering thermoplastics (ETPs); they are also sometimes classified as thermoplastic elastomers (TPEs); thermoplastic polyolefins (TPO); and thermoplastic polyurethanes (TPUs). This would include such materials as polycarbonates, high heat polycarbonates, polycarbonate blends (e.g., polyurethane/polycarbonate blends), styrenes, styrene blends such as acrylonitrile-butadiene-styrene copolymers (ABS), polycarbonate/ABS blends, polyamides, polyamide blends, acrylic-styrene-acrylonitriles (ASAs); acrylonitrile-ethylene-propylene-styrenes (AEWS), styrene-acrylonitrile-copolymer, styrene-maleic anhydrides, and the like. In a highly preferred embodiment, they include (without limitation) such materials as polycarbonates, acrylics, and polystyrene materials.

Fluid **42** is preferably a liquid which should have a relatively high boiling point. The relatively high boiling point allows fluid **42** to absorb a significant amount of heat and also to not evaporate or boil during the filtering process. Fluid **42** should have a boiling point (with pressure considerations being taken into account with respect to the following boiling points) of at least about 120°F, more preferably at least about 240°F, and ideally at least about 350°F, either under atmospheric conditions, or when contained in the chamber or system.

When fluid **42** acts as both a partial filter and as a cooling or heat transfer agent in the preferred embodiment, the preferred cooling/filtering fluid is a mixture of liquids comprising dimethyl esters of glutaric, adipic, and succinic acids. Such a dimethyl ester mixture is

available commercially and may be obtained from such sources as Du Pont under the tradename of Aliphatic Dibasic Esters; such materials are also known under the tradenames/synonyms of Dibasic Ester, Dibasic Ester Mixture, and DBF. Such materials are generally mixtures of materials of the formula  $\text{CH}_3\text{COO}(\text{CH}_2)_n\text{COOCH}_3$ , wherein  $n$  is an integer value from about 1 to about 5, more preferably from about 2 to about 4. In a highly preferred embodiment, the fluid **42** is a mixture comprising about 55-75 percent (by weight) of dimethyl glutarate, about 10-25% dimethyl adipate, and about 19-26% dimethyl succinate.

Other examples of useful materials employed when the fluid is primarily employed as a cooling fluid or agent include materials which transmit (do not absorb) the radiation that is desired to effect the welding. These include materials selected from the group consisting of glycerol, ethylene-glycerol, dioctyl phthalate, tributyl phosphene, mineral, and mixtures or derivatives of these materials. However, it is to be understood that the present invention is not limited to this fluid nor to fluids of these absorption wavelengths or boiling points, but includes other fluids, such as but not limited to gas compositions, whose physical characteristics are sufficient to filter undesirable radiation from any heating source used in a welding operation for any appropriate material.

Additives may also be employed in the cooling or cooling/filtering fluid so long as they do not substantially degrade the absorption profile of the liquid in any materially adverse way. For example, viscosity modifiers, thermal and UV stabilizers, colorants, pigments, visual indicators, and the like may be employed.

When fluid **42** acts only as a cooling or heat transfer agent in the present invention, fluid **42** may be a liquid containing 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 5-hexachloro-1,3-cyclopentadiene with a molecular weight of about 272.77 and a boiling point of between about 235 degrees Celsius and 238 degrees Celsius which may be obtained from such sources as Aldrich Chemical Company, Inc. Generally, the liquid should be substantially free from hydrocarbon absorptions or similar absorption profiles. Accordingly, organic fluids whose hydrogen atoms have been displaced in whole or in part by halogen atoms are preferred. Moreover, if the fluid is a liquid within this embodiment it may comprise water. It is to be understood that the present invention within this embodiment is not limited to liquids of this composition but includes those liquids which provide adequate cooling to the absorbing plates while absorbing little of the radiation themselves.

A heat exchanger **30** is connected in fluid communication to filter **28** in order to cool fluid **42** while filter **28** is absorbing the undesired wavelengths from radiation **22**. Pump **46** is preferably disposed in a supply line **48** between chamber **34** and heat exchanger **30**. The present invention also includes other techniques besides using pump **46** to transport fluid **42** between chamber **34** and heat exchanger **30**, such as but not limited to, transportation of fluid **42** through standard convec-

tion techniques.

A return line **50** returns the cooled fluid to chamber **34**. Any conventional heat exchanger **30** and pump **46** may be used in accordance with standard practices. During the filtering operation, heat exchanger **30** preferably maintains fluid **42** at a predetermined temperature range, e.g., preferably a range that would include from about 65°F to about 120°F. The continual removal of heated fluid from filter **28** with the resupply of cooled fluid into filter **28** provides filter **28** with a longer operational life than that experienced by known solid filters.

In a preferred embodiment, fluid **42** is contained in chamber **34** which has the following dimensions: one-fourth inches by twelve inches by one-eighth inches. However, it is to be understood that the dimensions of chamber **34** varies according to the particular application. Also in a preferred embodiment, about one-hundred percent of chamber **34** was filled with the Dibasic Ester fluid from Du Pont. Additionally, in a preferred embodiment, radiant heating lamp **20** is an ELC 250 watt 24 volt ac quartz-halogen General Electric reflector lamp, having either a multilayer dichroic coating for selectively reflecting preferred wavelengths, or an aluminized coating for reflecting relatively all visible and infrared radiation from the quartz-halogen source.

Figures 2a and 2b illustrate a side view and a top view respectively of an alternate embodiment for filter **28**. Referring to Figure 2a, housing **32** defines a chamber **34** which contains a solid material **54**. Solid material **54** is transparent to the welding energy or radiation of interest and absorbs predetermined wavelengths of the radiation before the radiation reaches the welding zone. The radiation enters filter **28** through a top plate **56** and is filtered by solid material **54** before exiting filter **28** through a bottom plate **58**.

Moreover, solid material **54** is cooled by fluid which enters chamber **34** through return line **50** and exits chamber **34** through supply line **48**. As disclosed above, the fluid may act as a cooling or heat transfer agent, or it may preferably act as both a partial filter and as a cooling or heat transfer agent.

Top plate **56** and bottom plate **58** are generally parallel or equidistant from each other. Top plate **56** and bottom plate **58** are preferably quartz plates which are obtainable from such sources as Quartz Scientific, Inc. These quartz plates have thicknesses of about one-eighth of an inch and are separated (or spaced) by a distance sufficient to accommodate solid material **54** and to allow adequate cooling of solid material **54** by the fluid.

It is to be understood, however, that the present invention is not limited to only quartz plates or to these dimensions or shapes. The present invention includes such other embodiments as those plates which transmit substantially all of the wavelengths of the radiation from a radiant heating lamp. Moreover, another alternate embodiment of the present invention includes at least one of the plates (**56** or **58**) being made of material function-

ally equivalent to solid material **54** in order to provide additional filtering capability.

Referring to Figure 2b, solid material **54** is connected through conventional techniques (e.g., glued or bolted) to sides **60** of housing **32** for support. However, it is to be understood that the present invention in this alternate embodiment is not limited to solid material **54** being supported only at sides **60** of housing **32**, but includes such other support mechanisms as will allow solid material **54** to be supported within housing **32** while still allowing solid material **54** to adequately absorb the predetermined wavelengths of the radiation.

#### EXAMPLE

Referring back to Figure 1, the present invention is specially well-suited for the TTIR welding of a first plastic part to a second plastic part. In one exemplary use of the present invention, first part **24** is a transmitting plastic **24** which is to be welded to second part **26**. Transmitting plastic **24** has the characteristic of absorbing little of the filtered radiation **44** as it transmits the filtered radiation **44** to the welding zone **27**. For this example, transmitting plastic **24** and second part **26** may be polycarbonate plastic parts.

According to a preferred embodiment, an absorbing material **52** is placed in welding zone **27** to generate heat upon the filtered radiation **44** reaching the welding zone **27**. Sufficient heat is generated by the absorbing material **52** so as to weld the transmitting plastic **24** to the second part **26**. The absorbing material **52** contained carbon black; however, other absorbing materials can be used which would generate sufficient heat to weld the parts.

For this example, the radiant heating lamp **20** was operated in the following manner (with filter **28** in place) in order to weld the transmitting plastic **24** to the second part **26**: radiant heating lamp **20** was operated at eighty percent to ninety percent of its rated voltage level to heat the absorbing material **52** (a ramp time of one-half to one second was used); radiant heating lamp **20** remained at that level between about six to about nine seconds; and radiant heating lamp **20** was operated at between about five percent to about thirty percent of its rated voltage level during the idle portions of the welding cycle.

Operation of radiant heating lamp **20** in the aforementioned manner substantially increased the useful life of the radiant heating lamp **20**. However, it is to be understood that the present invention is not limited to these operational ranges. The operational ranges may vary depending upon the particular radiant heating lamp **20** used and the parts to be welded. For example, the present invention includes operating radiant heating lamp **20** within a voltage range which has a lower limit of about sixty percent of the voltage level rating of the radiant heating lamp **20**.

With respect to TTIR applications, first plate **36** and

second plate **38** and fluid **42** employed in the preferred embodiment are materials whose absorption properties or profile are as close as possible to the transmitting plastic **24**. In some instances, it may be possible to use a prepolymer comprising one or more of the same monomers as the transmitting plastic **24**. Further, suitable derivatives of the monomers may be employed. Additionally, first plate **36** and second plate **38** and fluid **42** employed in the preferred embodiment transmit those wavelengths of the radiation **22** which are needed by the absorbing material **52** to heat welding zone **27**.

Additionally, the present invention also includes those TTIR applications wherein the second part **26** itself contains absorbing material **52** at least sufficiently near to the welding zone **27** so as to generate the heat needed to weld the transmitting plastic **24** to the second part **26**.

The embodiments which have been set forth above were for the purpose of illustration and were not intended to limit the invention. For example, the present invention is not limited to only welding applications, but includes those applications where filtering of undesired wavelengths is desired. Moreover, it will be appreciated by those skilled in the art that various changes and modifications may be made to the embodiments discussed in the specification without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as defined by the appended claims.

## Claims

1. A filter for filtering electromagnetic radiation used to heat a welding zone, comprising:
  - a solid material for absorbing predetermined wavelengths of said radiation before said radiation reaches said welding zone;
  - a housing which defines a chamber; and
  - a fluid disposed in said chamber for cooling said solid material.
2. The filter according to claim 1 wherein said housing includes a first and second plate defining said chamber, said solid material being used at least as one of said plates.
3. The filter according to claim 2 further comprising a second solid material contained within said chamber for absorbing said predetermined wavelengths of said radiation before said radiation reaches said welding zone.
4. The filter according to claim 1 wherein said housing includes a first and second plate defining said chamber, said first and second plates transmitting substantially all wavelengths of said radiation.
5. The filter according to claim 4 wherein said solid material is contained within said chamber.
6. The filter according to claim 1 wherein said first and second plates are quartz plates sealed together to form said chamber.
7. The filter according to claim 1 further comprising:
  - a heat exchanger in fluid communication with said housing for reducing the temperature of said fluid.
8. The filter according to claim 7 further comprising:
  - pump means connected to said housing and to said heat exchanger for pumping said fluid between said housing and said heat exchanger.
9. The filter according to claim 1 wherein said fluid is a liquid, said liquid having a boiling point above about 120°F.
10. The filter according to claim 9 wherein said liquid is an organic compound with at least one halogen atom being substituted for a hydrogen atom on said organic compound.
11. The filter according to claim 1 wherein said fluid absorbs substantially all predetermined wavelengths of said radiation before said radiation reaches said welding zone.
12. The filter according to claim 11 wherein said absorbed predetermined wavelengths of said radiation includes wavelengths of radiation above at least 1 micron.
13. The filter according to claim 12 wherein said absorbed predetermined wavelengths of said radiation includes radiation from at least about 1.2 microns to about 4 microns.
14. The filter according to claim 1 wherein said fluid is selected from the group consist of glycerol, ethylene-glycerol, dioctyl phthalate, tributyl phosphene, mineral, and mixtures or derivatives of these materials.
15. The filter according to claim 1 wherein said fluid is a mixture of liquid, said liquid being dimethyl esters of glutaric, adipic and succinic acids.
16. The filter according to claim 1 wherein the wavelengths of said radiation are substantially within the infrared electromagnetic spectrum.
17. The filter according to claim 1 wherein said radiation is produced from a radiant heating lamp.

18. The filter according to claim 1 wherein said welding zone defines an area for welding a first and second plastic part, said first part transmitting substantially all wavelengths of said radiation.
19. The filter according to claim 18 wherein said second part absorbs second predetermined wavelengths of said radiation.
20. The filter according to claim 18 wherein said welding zone includes an absorbing material which is heated by said filtered radiation in order to weld said first and second part.
21. The filter according to claim 18 wherein said radiation is produced from a radiant heating lamp, said filter further comprising: a heat exchanger in fluid communication with said housing for reducing the temperature of said fluid.
22. The filter according to claim 17 wherein said solid material is substantially the same material as said first part.
23. The filter according to claim 1 wherein said solid material is substantially motionless in said fluid while said solid material absorbs said predetermined wavelengths of said radiation.
24. A method for filtering electromagnetic radiation used to heat a welding zone, comprising the steps of:
- emitting said radiation from a heating source; absorbing predetermined wavelengths of said radiation by a solid material to produce filtered radiation; cooling said absorbing solid material with a fluid, said fluid being disposed in a chamber of a housing; and providing said filtered radiation to said welding zone.
25. The method according to claim 24 further comprising the step of:
- absorbing the predetermined wavelengths of said radiation by said fluid to produce said filtered radiation.
26. The method according to claim 25 further comprising the step of:
- cooling said fluid.
27. The method according to claim 26 further comprising the step of:
- providing a heat exchanger for reducing the temperature of said fluid.
28. The method according to claim 27 further comprising:
- pumping said fluid to said heat exchanger.
29. The method according to claim 24 wherein said housing includes first and second plates defining said chamber, said solid material being used at least as one of said plates.
30. The method according to claim 29 wherein a second solid material is contained within said chamber for absorbing said predetermined wavelengths of said radiation to produce said filtered radiation.
31. The method according to claim 24 wherein said housing includes first and second plates defining said chamber, said first and second plates transmitting substantially all wavelengths of said radiation.
32. The method according to claim 31 wherein said solid material is contained within said chamber.
33. The method according to claim 31 wherein said first and second plates are quartz plates sealed together to form said chamber.
34. The method according to claim 24 wherein said fluid is a liquid, said liquid having a boiling point above about 120°F.
35. The method according to claim 34 wherein said liquid is an organic compound with at least one halogen atom being substituted for a hydrogen atom on said organic compound.
36. The method according to claim 24 wherein said fluid is a liquid which absorbs predetermined wavelengths of said radiation before said radiation reaches said welding zone.
37. The method according to claim 36 wherein said absorbed predetermined wavelengths of said radiation includes wavelengths of radiation above at least 1 micron.
38. The method according to claim 37 wherein said absorbed predetermined wavelengths of said radiation includes radiation from at least about 1.2 microns to about 4 microns.
39. The method according to claim 38 wherein said liquid being dimethyl esters of glutaric, adipic and succinic acids.
40. The method according to claim 24 wherein the wavelengths of said radiation are substantially within the infrared electromagnetic spectrum.

41. The method according to claim 24 wherein said radiation is produced from a radiant heating lamp.
42. The method according to claim 24 wherein said welding zone defines an area for welding a first and second plastic part, said first part transmitting substantially all wavelengths of said filtered radiation.
43. The method according to claim 42 wherein said second part absorbs second predetermined wavelengths of said radiation.
44. The method according to claim 42 wherein said welding zone includes an absorbing material which is heated by said filtered radiation in order to weld said first and second part.
45. The method according to claim 42 wherein said radiation is produced from a radiant heating lamp, said method further comprising the step of:  
providing a heat exchanger for reducing the temperature of said fluid.
46. The method according to claim 24 wherein said solid material is substantially the same material as said first part.
47. The method according to claim 24 wherein said solid material is substantially motionless in said fluid while said solid material absorbs said predetermined wavelengths of said radiation.
48. The method according to claim 44 wherein said radiation is produced from a radiant heating lamp, said method further comprising the step of:  
providing a heat exchanger for reducing the temperature of said fluid.
49. The method according to claim 42 wherein said radiation is produced from a radiant heating lamp, said radiant heating lamp having a predetermined voltage level rating, said method further comprising the step of:  
operating said radiant heating lamp at a first predetermined range in order to heat said welding zone, said first predetermined range having a lower limit of about sixty percent of said predetermined voltage level rating.
50. The method according to claim 49 wherein said first predetermined range is from about seventy percent of said predetermined voltage level rating to about ninety percent of said predetermined voltage level rating.
51. The method according to claim 24 wherein said radiation is produced from a radiant heating lamp, said radiant heating lamp having a predetermined voltage level rating, said method further comprising the step of:  
operating said radiant heating lamp at a first predetermined range in order to heat said welding zone, said first predetermined range having a lower limit of about sixty percent of said predetermined voltage level rating.
52. The method according to claim 51 further comprising the step of:  
providing a ramp time of between about .5 to about 1 seconds to reach said first predetermined range for said radiant heating lamp.
53. The method according to claim 24 wherein said radiation is produced from a radiant heating lamp, said radiant heating lamp being operated according to steps (a) - (c):  
(a) operating said radiant heating lamp at a first predetermined range in order to heat said welding zone, said first predetermined range having a lower limit of about sixty percent of said predetermined voltage level rating;  
(b) idling said radiant heating lamp at a second predetermined range, said second predetermined range having a lower limit of about five percent of said predetermined voltage level rating; and  
(c) operating said radiant heating lamp at said first predetermined range in order to heat said welding zone, wherein step (c) is performed subsequent to step (b).
54. The method according to claim 53 wherein said second predetermined range has an upper limit of about thirty percent of said predetermined voltage level rating.
55. The method according to claim 53 further comprising the step of:  
providing a ramp time of between about .5 to about 1 seconds to reach said first predetermined range for said radiant heating lamp.
56. A filter for filtering electromagnetic radiation used to heat a welding zone, comprising:  
a housing which includes a first and second plate for defining a chamber wherein at least one of said plates absorbs predetermined wavelengths of said radiation before said radiation reaches said welding zone; and  
a fluid disposed in said chamber for cooling said solid material.
57. The filter according to claim 56 wherein said fluid absorbs substantially all predetermined wave-

lengths of said radiation before said radiation reaches said welding zone.

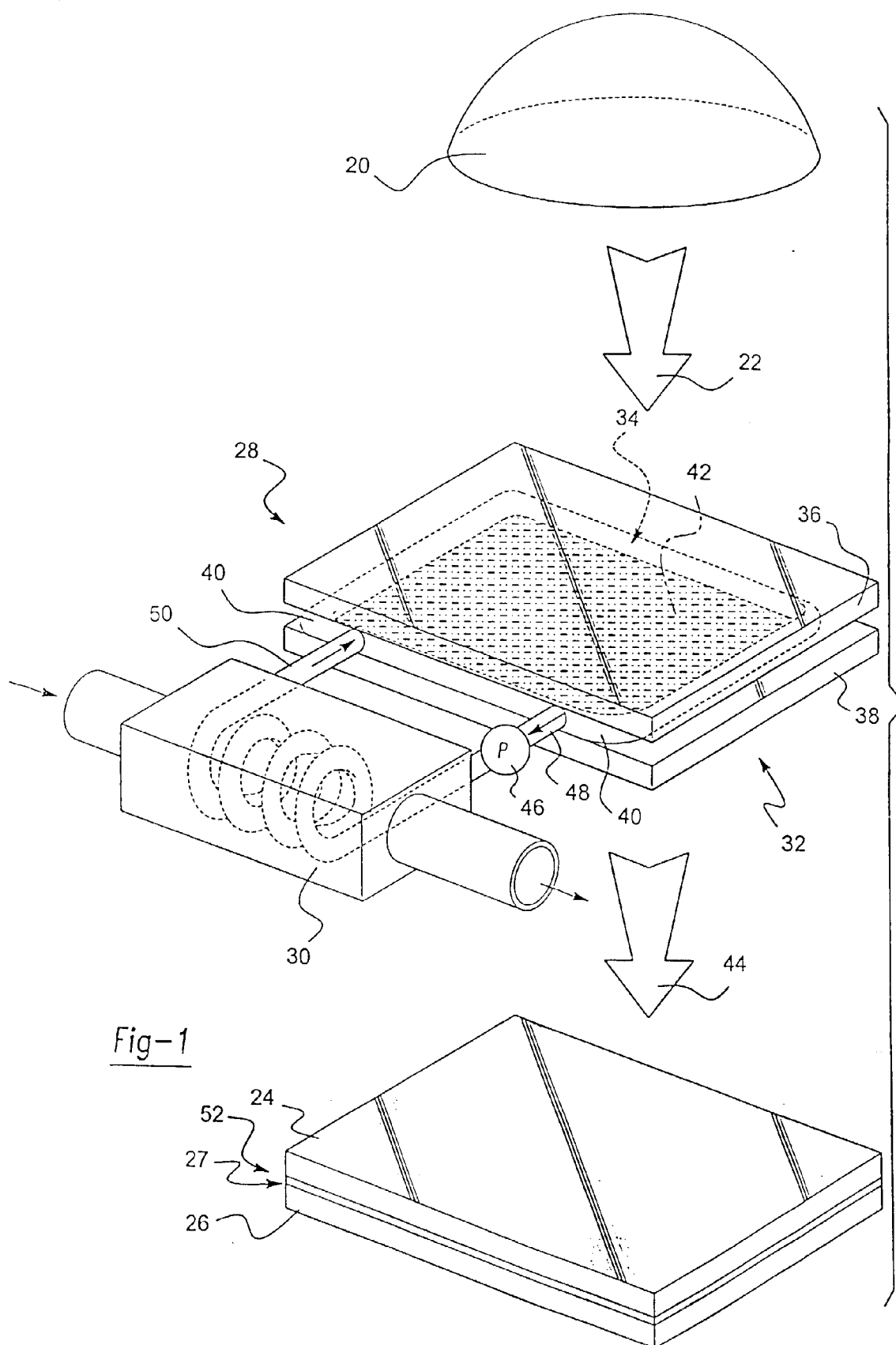
- 58.** The filter according to claim 56 further comprising:  
a heat exchanger in fluid communication with said housing for reducing the temperature of said fluid. 5
- 59.** A filter for filtering electromagnetic radiation used to heat a welding zone, comprising: 10  
a housing which defines a chamber;  
a solid material disposed within said chamber for absorbing predetermined wavelengths of said radiation before said radiation reaches said welding zone; and 15  
a fluid disposed in said chamber for cooling said solid material.
- 60.** The filter according to claim 59 wherein said fluid absorbs substantially all predetermined wavelengths of said radiation before said radiation reaches said welding zone. 20
- 61.** The filter according to claim 59 further comprising:  
a heat exchanger in fluid communication with said housing for reducing the temperature of said fluid. 25
- 62.** A filter for filtering electromagnetic radiation used to heat a welding zone, comprising: 30  
a housing which includes a first and second plate for defining a chamber wherein at least one of said plates absorbs predetermined wavelengths of said radiation before said radiation reaches said welding zone; 35  
a solid material disposed within said chamber for absorbing predetermined wavelengths of said radiation before said radiation reaches said welding zone; and 40  
a fluid disposed in said chamber for cooling said absorbing plate and said solid material.
- 63.** The filter according to claim 62 wherein said fluid absorbs substantially all predetermined wavelengths of said radiation before said radiation reaches said welding zone. 45
- 64.** The filter according to claim 62 further comprising:  
a heat exchanger in fluid communication with said housing for reducing the temperature of said fluid. 50
- 65.** A method of heating a welding zone, comprising the steps of: 55

emitting electromagnetic radiation from a heat-

ing source toward said welding zone;  
absorbing predetermined wavelengths of said radiation by a solid material prior to said radiation reaching said welding zone;  
cooling said absorbing solid material with a liquid.

- 66.** The method according to claim 65 wherein said liquid is disposed in a chamber of a housing.
- 67.** The method according to claim 65 further comprising the step of:  
providing a heat exchanger for reducing the temperature of said liquid.





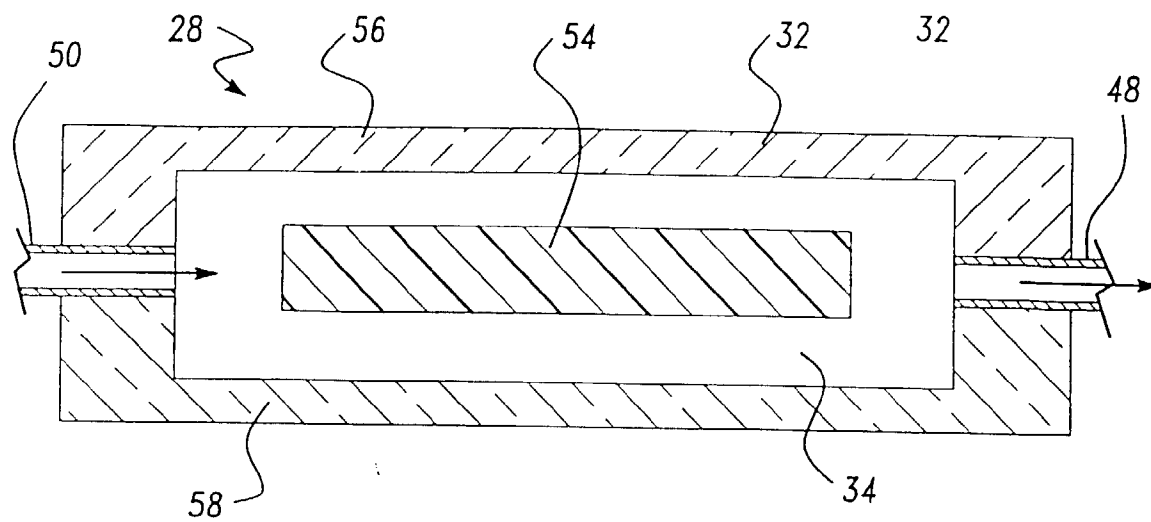


Fig-2a

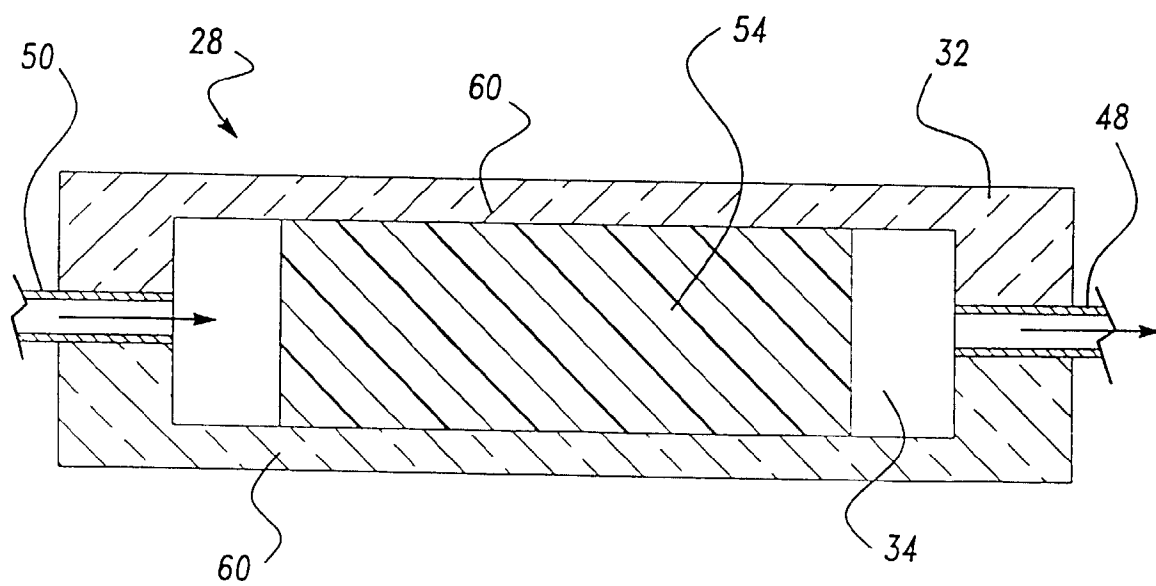


Fig-2b